

DRAFT

Village of Ardentown
Ardentown, DE 19810

Established 1922
Incorporated 1975

The regular meeting of the Village of Ardentown was convened at 7:30 pm on Monday, September 14, 2020 Alison Wakelin, Town Chair, presiding. A quorum was present.

In Attendance

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Alison Wakelin | 16. Joan Fitzgerald | 30. Barbara |
| 2. Lisa Riblett | 17. Holly Custer | Mondzelewski |
| 3. Terri Hansen | 18. Edmond Bischoff | 31. Melissa Parsonson |
| 4. Drew Hansen | 19. Cheryl Regan | 32. Chris Monson |
| 5. Beverly Fleming | 20. Jeana Carey | 33. Alexandra Cooper |
| 6. Anne Lutz | 21. Janet Cosgrove | 34. Christiana |
| 7. Cindy Cohen | 22. Pat Lane | Dobrzynski |
| 8. Terry Harvey | 23. Sue Cherrin | 35. Chelsey Buscaglia |
| 9. Line Farr | 24. Joe Grippe | 36. Mhairi Craig |
| 10. Betty Ann Themal | 25. Bob Erenburg | 37. Stuart Craig |
| 11. Harry Themal | 26. Ellie Hansen | 38. Allan Kleban |
| 12. Maureen Gordon | 27. Elaine Schmerling | 39. Ray Seigfried, guest |
| 13. Sharon Kleban | 28. Warren Butt | 40. Jennifer Borders, |
| 14. Oliver Gutsche | 29. Janna Scheflen | guest |
| 15. Annie Gutsche | | |

Town Chair Introduction-In order to conduct our business tonight, we will go through the agenda and as you are called on, please unmute yourself to give your report. Be aware that if we get into a discussion, we have to take turns speaking, please raise your hand through the Zoom link, otherwise you can put a message in chat to either the whole group or to Cindy Cohen, who will be in charge of administrative matters for this zoom meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the May /June 2020 meeting were changed. In the Registration report for May/June 2020, there were resident changes not leaseholders changes. With that correction, the minutes were unanimously approved.

TRUSTEES REPORT: Harry Themal statement - "For some time I have been thinking about retiring as a trustee and now that time has come. I finally set an unbreakable target date of my 90th birthday, if I was lucky enough to reach it. So I have told Joan and Pat that I am retiring and that they choose a successor who'll be voted on at a leaseholders' meeting. I will continue to be a Trustee until that successor is ready to go. I will remain a resource if needed." December 26, 2020 is Harry Themal's 90th birthday.

Joan Fitzgerald reporting - a letter to all leaseholders will be sent this week. This letter will outline the requirements for standing as a Trustee as well as a job description. Joan Fitzgerald hopes that folks will think about standing, or encouraging others to do so.

Senior discount checks have been distributed totalling \$21,700;

NCC/School tax bill: \$330,730.

Both of these are approximately the same as last year. The property tax bill is ready to go to the county.

There was one leasehold change from Jeff and Pam Politis to William Jefferson Ryan III, 2204 Sconset Road. Still no response to the call for a secretary to the Trustee, Joan continues to work with Melissa DiBacco.

Pat Lane reporting - Tree work has been done on Ivy Gables along Harvey and Millers. There may be more later. A branch was taken down at Harvey and Loreley, low hanging trees on the Mall were trimmed, and the tree at the corner of the Grippe property will be brought down in October. Delmarva will be trimming trees between now and the end of the year

GUEST SPEAKER - Ray Seigfried- Encourages everyone to please go out and vote at the Democratic Primary tomorrow. Mr Seigfried is working to further racial justice and police reform. He also continues to work on tackling the Covid Pandemic. He encourages everyone to get their flu shot this year. There is lots of business coming up related to many pertinent topics such as clean energy, climates changes. Pat Lane asked about the Marsh/Harvey/Grubb intersection. DE government is pursuing funding through the Federal Government and other sources. He continues to fight to improve that intersection.

STATEMENT OF ANTI-RACISM - The following statement was first voted on in the Arden Town Meeting, and then at the Ardencroft Town Meeting. Tonight, we join our sister Ardens in making a statement of anti-racism.

The Village of Ardentown acknowledges that society is in a moment of significant transformation. Therefore, the Village pledges its support for working towards racial justice and for solidarity with all people of color both within our community and in the larger culture.

Discussion followed prior to the vote. The statement passed unanimously as written. The statement will be sent to the Governor, our State Representative and our State Senator.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Holly Custer reporting:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Operating Accounts: | \$ 51,412.64 |
| Municipal Street Aid: | \$ 25,959.32 |
| <u>Arden Building and Loan:</u> | <u>\$ 19,965.18</u> |
| Total Funds Available: | \$97,337.14 |

AUDIT REPORT: Drew Hansen reporting - The Audit Committee, comprising Drew Hansen (chair), Stefanie Lombardo, and Terry Harvey met on August 29, 2020 to conduct the audits of the 2019 books of the Ardentown Trust and also the Village of Ardentown, including the general fund, the Memorial Garden fund, and the municipal street aid provided by the State of Delaware.

Upon review of the ledgers, bank statements, and supporting documentation (i.e., invoices, receipts, contracts, etc.) for each set of books, the committee found the books to be in good order.

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE: Cindy Cohen reporting:

1. **Recent Resident Changes:**

- a. **Eric Myers & Margaret Brabson Myers** (and their dog, LaLa) moved into 2303 East Mall, apartment #1 back in November 2019. They received their welcome packet in July, when we learned they were here. Our apologies for our tardiness in welcoming you to Ardentown!
- b. The leasehold at 2204 Sconset Road was transferred on August 21st from Pam & Jeff Politis to **William Jefferson Ryan III**. Please welcome William to Ardentown. The Registration Committee will be getting him his Welcome packet shortly.
- c. **Newcomers: Are there any new residents in attendance at tonight's meeting?** If so, please raise your hand and we will unmute you so you can introduce yourself.
- d. **As always, if you know of any other leasehold changes, or changes in rentals** within Ardentown, please contact one of the Registration Committee members. It takes the whole village to keep track of all the comings and goings of our residents.

2. **Upcoming Registration Committee Member Elections:**

Both Cindy Cohen and Maureen Gordon's terms are up for re-election this month. Both members are willing to serve again on the Registration Committee. Although if there are others wanting to join the committee, we would welcome new members.

MEMORIAL GARDEN: Betty Ann Themal reporting: The committee was contacted by Linda Toman from Ardencroft requesting us to permit Ardencroft residents be interred in our memorial garden. This question was brought to us several years ago and the present committee's reply, as it was previously, was "no". Thanks to committee member Chris Monson who created a "plot plan" helping us to identify burial sites. Chris Monson also trimmed an overgrown weeping cherry tree, and removed an unwanted "volunteer tree" which had grown near the south east fence corner

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE: Janet Cosgrove reporting: The committee had its first meeting with ex officio member Drew Hansen, chair of Budget and Audit committees. Joe Grippe and Janet Cosgrove brought Drew Hansen up to speed with our findings and progress thus far. Joe Grippe completed his database of NCC taxes for 5 years for each Ardentown leasehold and added a column for each leasehold's Land Rent 2020. The committee will call its first meeting with the trustees to be scheduled at an agreeable time in October.

Both Joe Grippe and Page Dwyer are standing for re-election tonight. Page Dwyer will serve on the committee but is willing to step down if another resident would be interested to serve in Page Dwyer's place, and for that reason, the committee will actively look for her replacement. The committee was formed in Sept 2019; the 3 members have each served for only one year.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE: Melissa Parsonson reporting: Extending the 15th Anniversary Exhibition. Community members can call to make an appointment. They are looking for Ardencroft artwork from the 1950-1970 time period to be included in a 70th anniversary Ardencroft exhibition. They are particularly looking for artists of color.

BUZZ COMMITTEE: nothing to report

PUBLIC WORKS:

Roads:

Road work was completed with numerous areas repaired. A few additional pot holes were also filled.

Rich Cropper is looking into the erosion at the end of East Mall and Sconset roads to see what can be done.

The gutter on Sconset Road just past Valley Road will be replaced to assist with water run off.

Paths:

Many of the major paths were cleared and wood chips were put down on Station Path, Brae Rd. path, and the path behind Cohens. Huge thanks to Chris Monson for clearing many very large trees that came down on the paths in Sunnyside.

Restoration

Elaine Schmerling has worked with a few other helpers and volunteers. We continue clearing all the invasives – mugwort and stiltgrass off the paths, mile-a-minute in our last years' tree planting area in Sunnyside, and others. We encourage you all to remove these and the white sweet Autumn clematis blooming now.

Spotted lanternfly (SLF)

We worked with the Arden Club's Gardeners Guild SLF Task Force of the Ardens, sponsoring 8 public workshops to make traps to protect our street trees and helping residents make traps to take home. We targeted their favorites, walnuts and silver and red maples (they are especially going to the maples now). We have 60 traps in Ardentown, especially on the Greens and E. Mall. We encourage homeowners too to trap these trees on or near their leaseholds, and directions are online and on the Ardentown bulletin board.

We have continued working on our integrated pest management approach and had over 40 tree of heaven trees (TOH), their major host plant, on town lands killed, and are working on 100's of suckers that they keep sprouting. Carol Larson then trap-treated 24 TOH remaining on Ardentown lands, and multiple Japanese styrax or snowbell trees, especially on East Mall. This trap-treating of non-native trees could have the most significant effect to reduce our SLF

population. We encourage residents near the CSX and power lines to watch out for TOH sprouts and contact me if you need assistance. Ardentown thanks Elaine Schmerling for all of her hard work as does the Village of Ardentown.

TOWN CHAIR REPORT: There are grants turning up from various sources in the county and state, and sometimes we don't get much time to respond to them. Alison Wakelin thinks it would be a good thing for Community Planning to work on liaising with the state and county on grants. Alison Wakelin would love to see someone interested in Community Planning and asks that they contact her for more information.

DEMA and DNREC are planning matching grants next year that we could possibly use for stormwater management, which is becoming a major issue in Ardentown. We have erosion on several roads, and big problems on some leaseholds, especially on East Mall, as a result of stormwater runoff, exacerbated by the growing intensity of storms in recent years. Community Planning could be very helpful here, along with Public Works.

The three villages have created a pilot program with Waste Management to reduce recycling pick up to once every two weeks, as an alternative to a large increase in cost. The program will last until the end of December, and residents are encouraged to give feedback to Cheryl Regan (public works) or to Alison Wakelin. Residents can contact Alison Wakelin or Cheryl Regan if they need new cans, but the purpose of the program is to test if we can manage with one.

Melissa Parsonson - what is going to be done about the runoff from Ivy Gables? For the short term, Rich Cropper has been asked to fix the road at the end of the East Mall in front of the Phibbs leasehold. In the longer term, we need a realistic assessment of the problem, and a clear plan to address it, so first we will see the results of Arden's stormwater survey (expected soon), and then we will decide how to address our own problems. Realistically we should look to next spring for a plan to solve this.

Jeanna Carey - Tomorrow is our election day, where can we vote? Gild Hall is not open as a polling place. Janet Cosgrove believes that Springer Junior High is the closest polling place. It was discovered later in the meeting that the Gild Hall would be our polling place.

ELECTIONS:

Registration - Cindy Cohen and Maureen Gordon - re-elected unanimously

Budget - Drew Hansen and Stefanie Lombardo - re-elected unanimously

Assessment - Page Dwyer and Joe Grippe - re-elected unanimously

NEW BUSINESS:

Joe Grippe - Bylaws - Would like to present the updated Bylaws with updated formatting for a vote of approval. This is only a formatting change. Drew Hansen - why do the Town Officers or should the Town Officers place signatures on the Bylaws. The signature is a certification of the update, not an endorsement or approval by the Town Officers.

Joan Fitzgerald - All the other dates on various forms have been not in the European format (date/month/year).

Harry Themal - would like the updated Bylaws be posted on the web page and have them voted on in the November meeting.

Joe Grippe - There has been no content change to the Bylaws since the approval in September 2019, this is only a formatting change.

Jeanna Carey - Would like to see the date printed on the bottom left of each page so it is clear when the document was produced.

Harry Themal - It looks very good Joe Grippe

Drew Hansen - Point of order, we have to vote on bylaws in two consecutive Town Meetings to change them. A motion is made that a formatting change is not an actual change and so therefore needs a vote in only one Town Meeting to be applied. Passed by a majority.

Joe Grippe - I move that the Secretary of the Town Meeting post online the minutes from the September 10th, 2018 special town meeting within two weeks of today, and that a vote to approve those minutes be added to the November 2020 Town Meeting agenda and that vote carried out during that meeting. Upon approval, the approved minutes from

the September 10th, 2018 Town Meeting as amended shall be posted and maintained along with all other Town Meeting minutes.

There was discussion around this motion, focusing on whether such minutes could be accurately remembered after so long a time, but it was suggested that individuals could make their own decision on this in the event of a vote. This motion passed with a majority of votes.

Joe Grippe- As a leaseholder, I want to propose an amendment to the Deed of Trust to add term limits to the text, which should be done at the next leaseholders meeting prior to the election of the next Trustee.

The amendment to the Deed of Trust is to add the following statement, or modification to that statement, "A Trustee term is defined as 5 calander years from the date of confirmation to office. Once a term has been complete, the Trustee may be reelected for 2 additional consecutive terms by a majority of those present at a meeting of leaseholders of which due notice has been given."

Betty Ann Themal- this borders on amending the Deed of Trust, to make this permanent you need to amend, and there is a process for this. She suggests that should the Trustees and Leaseholders approve term limits, the candidate for the Trustee to be appointed should have agreed in advance to accept these limits. Betty Ann Themal feels that a Committee should be formed to bring concerns to the Leaseholder and Residents.

Allan Kleban - Point of discussion, Trustees have always been Trustees for life, he feels that 5 years is not long enough

Joan Fitzgerald - She points out that you would want to ensure institutional knowledge and not have all new and young trustees

Alison Wakelin agrees that the formation of a Committee to consider changes to the Deed of Trust is a good idea.

Lisa Ribblett - She would be concerned about making this change quickly, and feels it should be carefully considered.

Janet Cosgrove - Nowhere does it determine that a Trustee serves for life, it was a tradition. She would like to arrange a future Zoom meeting in a couple of weeks for an informal conversation around this topic.

Harry Themal - This document is 100 years old and has been amended once, making it sacred.

Terri Hansen - The Deed of Trust for Ardentown was written in the view of the first 22 years of life in Arden. Let us think how many times the Constitution was amended in the first 100 years of its life as a living document representing a living society. Maybe one amendment hasn't been enough.

Alison Wakelin asked for a list of names of people who would like to be included in a committee to discuss the proposed changes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm

Respectfully Submitted By

Terri Hansen, Secretary of Ardentown